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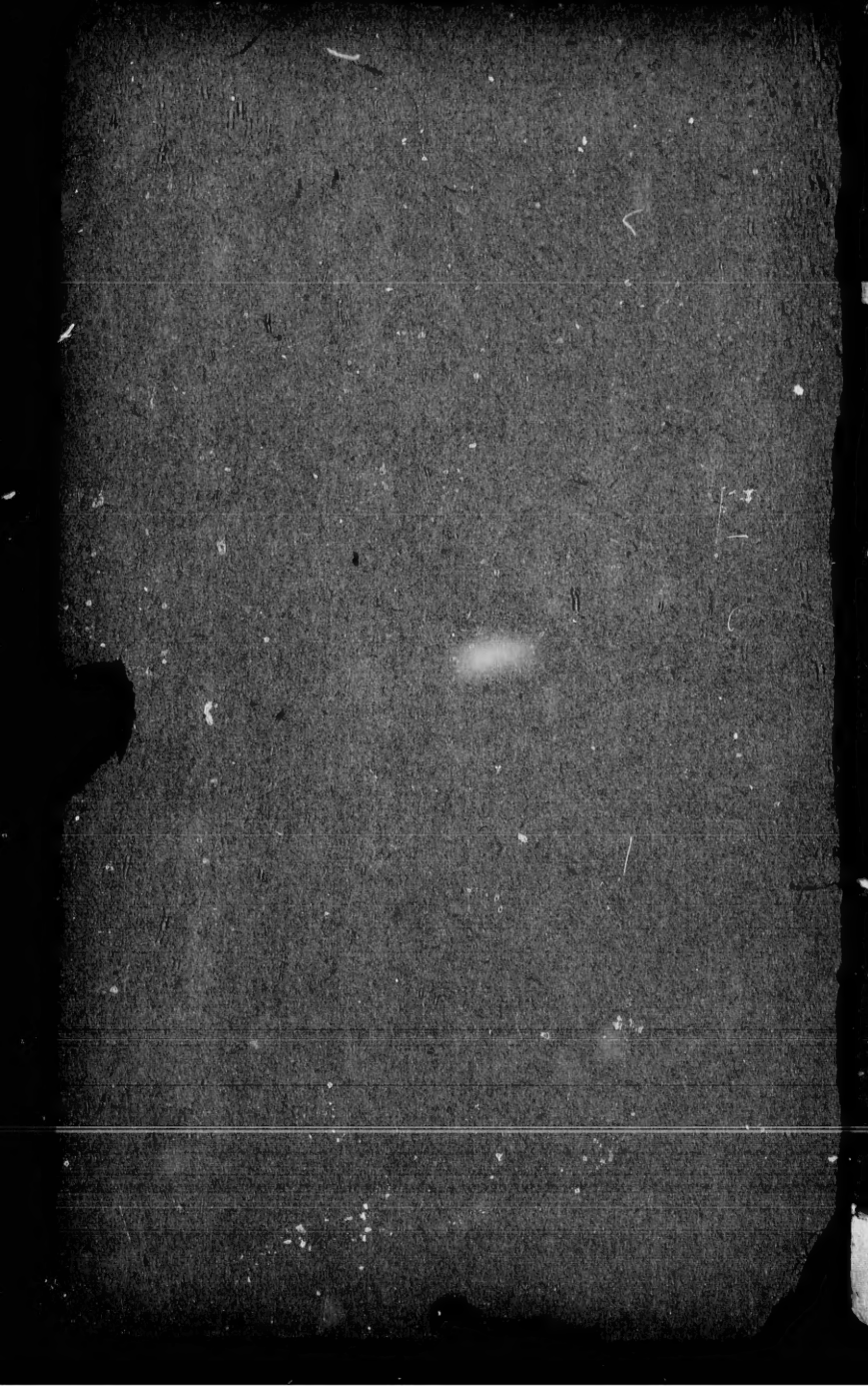
HISTORY

—OF THE—

Hantsport Baptist Church.

By W. A. PORTER.

HANTSPORT, N. S.
1894.



HISTORY

OF THE

Hantsport Baptist Church.

THIS CHURCH was organized at Falmouth, in the County of Hants, on the 13th day of January, 1830, in a house used for public worship, and known as a Union Meeting House ; situated at Mt. Denson, and afterward owned and occupied by the Wesleyan Methodists.

Eighteen of the members of the Baptist Church at Windsor having obtained letters of dismission from that church for the purpose of forming a separate church, called a council from the following churches, viz.: Windsor, Horton, and Cornwallis. It was, by unanimous vote, declared that it would for the Glory of God, and the convenience and comfort of His people, that a separate church be now formed to be known as the Particular Church of Falmouth. The council, in accordance with this resolution, proceeded to the organizing of the church. Peleg Holmes and John Masters were chosen and ordained deacons. Elder Richard McLearn delivered an address founded upon the 19th and 20th verses of the second chapter of Ephesians. Two candidates were received for baptism and two by letters from other churches. Thus the church was organized with a membership of twenty-five without a Pastor.

On April 17th, 1830, at a meeting of the church it was, by unanimous vote, decided that a council be called for the purpose of setting apart to the gospel ministry Robert Dickie. Consequently a council convened from the churches at Windsor, Horton, Cornwallis, Newport and Chester on the 19th day of May following, when Robert Dickie was duly ordained to the work of the ministry; and although there is no definite record of the fact, there is sufficient evidence on the minutes of the church to conclude that he became its pastor, and remained with them as such until 1834. From that date until February 11th, 1837, the church was without a pastor. At that time Elder John Cogswell was engaged as pastor for one year, although until 1839 the church was without a pastor a portion of the time; yet the meeting were well attended and strict discipline maintained. The church at this time numbered 76: 66 being received by baptism and letters, and 15 excluded.

In March, 1833, Ezra Churchill was by vote of the church allowed a license to preach, within the limits of the church only; and Allen Young and Clark Young were ordained deacons.

In 1836 we have the first mention of a church clerk, when Elisha Holmes was elected assistant clerk. In 1839 Louis Lockwood was appointed church clerk in place of Allen Young who resigned.

During the summer of 1839 Elder James Stevens supplied the pulpit for a time, and in November of that year was engaged for twelve months as pastor. We do not know whether the pastors engaged up to this time gave their services gratuitously or not, but we now have the first intimation of any pay being given; the record shows that the church agreed to raise a salary by subscription. There is no record of the length of time that Elder Stevens

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remained with the church. No mention being made of a pastor during the years 1840-1, we conclude the church was without one; but notwithstanding, they were not idle, public meetings being held up to this date in the old Baptist Church at Falmouth, and in the school-houses at Hantsport and Brooklyn.

The time had now arrived when the erection of suitable buildings for public worship at Brooklyn (then known as Stony Hill,) and Hantsport became a necessity. Consequently, with the zeal and energy which characterized the members of the church at that time, they erected a meeting-house at Brooklyn, and immediately following, one at Hantsport.

In 1842, Elder Aaron Cogswell accepted a call and became pastor of the church, and remained two years.

In July, 1842, Levi Lockhart, Joseph Brown and Frederick Nusin were appointed and ordained deacons.

During the years intervening between 1830 and 1843, the church had three places of public worship—at Falmouth, Hantsport and Brooklyn; the first and last named being branches of the Falmouth church.

On May 13th, 1842, eighteen members of the church residing at Falmouth, and which constituted the branch at that place, asked for and obtained letters of dismission for the purpose of organizing a separate church there.

In the same year Levi Lockhart, a member of the church, was granted a license to preach within the limits of the church. William Davison and Edward Davison were also appointed deacons.

In 1842 Rev. Benjamin Vaughan was engaged as pastor of the church at a salary of £60, and remained until the fall of 1849. During the pastor-

ate of Elder Vaughan the church largely increased in membership.

March 18th, 1847, Deacon William Davison was appointed clerk; and on March 24th, 1849, Andrew Lockhart and Nathan Harris were appointed deacons, and ordained to that office.

From 1849 to 1852 the church was without a regular pastor. These years seem some of the darkest in the history of the church; yet the public services were sustained and the prayer and conference meetings kept up, but there lacked much spiritual life. During the three years fifteen were added to the church by baptism.

In June of 1852 the Central Association met with the church. In October of that year P. A. Shields, a student from Acadia College, was engaged to preach; and on March 12th, 1853, (a council being called for the purpose,) he was ordained to the gospel ministry, and became pastor of the church from date of ordination to January 10th, 1861. There is no record, it having been either lost or destroyed, therefore the writer has to depend upon the memory of older church members for information, which is very limited. It is supposed to be during these years that the name of the church was changed to the Hantsport Baptist Church. How long P. A. Shields remained pastor is not definitely known, but probably not more than three years.

Rev. Wm. Burton was the next pastor, but the exact date of his coming is not established, but thought to be in the year 1853. During his pastorate the church was greatly revived, and many were added to its numbers. The membership now was 251. The pastor had the assistance of A. Langille, a student from Acadia College, and also of Davenport Cox of—, who was a member of the church and had been licensed to preach. These brethren

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laboured with much acceptance and were valuable assistants to the pastor who closed his ministry with this church in 1861.

From October, 1861, until October, 1862, the church was again without a pastor, and was supplied from Acadia College. In October, 1862, Rev. J. H. Foshay accepted a call, but in consequence of impaired health (the field being large) was obliged in April, 1863, to resign, which left the church again without a pastor.

In October, 1863, Rev. Wm. Burton was again called, which call he accepted, and on March 8th, 1864, resumed the pastorate. His second, as well as his first labours in this portion of God's vineyard, were marked with much success. He was a man of very peculiar talents, not having had the advantages of early education. He was not fully qualified to exhibit the superiority of his natural abilities, yet his great fund of knowledge of the Scriptures, his practical application of the same; his sound, deep, and thorough theological training, left its impress upon the church which is felt to this day. He had a very benevolent disposition, and was exceedingly generous to the poor; so much so that he was often the subject of imposition, and at times it was difficult for the church to supply his wants and his many benevolent schemes.

In the year 1866 David Pulsifer, John Porter and Harris Rind were appointed deacons, and Deacon N. I. Harris, clerk. During Mr. Burton's pastorate the church was found too small to accommodate the congregation, and an addition was made sufficient to seat about one hundred persons. During the last year of the pastor's charge he was frequently confined to his home by sickness, and substitutes had to be secured from other places. At this time there was a steady increase of member-

ship to the church. Rev. D. M. Welton (then pastor of the Windsor Baptist church) and Rev. E. O. Reed from the Gaspereaux church, frequently occupied the pulpit and administered the ordinance of baptism. A number that are now members received the rite of baptism from the hands of these brethren. Brother Burton continued to be pastor until April 26th, 1867, when he departed this life, beloved by his church and mourned by the community generally, who regarded him as a faithful pastor and devoted friend.

From the death of Rev. Wm. Burton until August of that year the pulpit was supplied by Brothers Titus, Manning and others from Acadia College.

On the 1st day of August, 1867, Rev. F. E. Balcom accepted a call and continued as pastor until August 7th, 1870. The church never having previously owned a parsonage concluded to buy one, and in a short time a suitable one was secured. In the spring of 1869, after repairs had been made on the building, the pastor moved upon the property now owned by the church at a cost of \$1575: and, through the energy and perseverance of the pastor, free from debt. During the labours of Brother Balcom the building at Brooklyn had also received repairs to the amount of \$460, without incurring a debt.

In 1870 Rev. Joseph Murray became pastor of the church, and during his labours many additions were made to its numbers—there now being 331 members. Wm. West was appointed clerk during this pastorate, but remained in office only a short time. Brother C. I. Margeson was appointed in his stead, and is clerk of the church at the present time.

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cure a pastor, yet the church remained without one until May, 1875. During the interval the pulpit was principally occupied by the Rev. R. R. Philips, who resided at that time in Hantsport.

In May of the same year R. v. J. C. Bleakney accepted a unanimous call to the church, and remained its pastor until 1878. During the three years of his labour as pastor the church largely increased in membership—151 being added by baptism and letter. A vestry was also added to the church building at a cost of \$1200. In 1876 the Central Association met with the church, and during its session a council was called at the Brooklyn branch for the purpose of organizing a separate church, when letters of dismission were granted to 102 members who organized the church known as the Brooklyn Baptist Church. Leave of absence was granted the pastor in the year 1877 for three months to enable him to visit Europe. During his absence the pulpit was filled by Rev. A. F. Stevens, who laboured with good acceptance among the people. Rev. J. C. Bleakney's labours with the church terminated May 1st, 1878.

On July 1st, 1878, Rev. Edw. Whitman became its pastor. During his labours there was no particular event in the history of the church to record. Rufus Comstock, Israel Trask were appointed deacons. The old parsonage, which was found inconvenient after the branches had been constituted churches and supplied themselves, had been sold and a new one purchased more convenient to the meeting-house. It was also found that the annual contributions to the minister's salary had been largely increased, and was much in excess of any preceding year—amounting in all to about \$1000 per year.

From the close of Rev. E. Whitman's pastor-

ate until November 5th of the same year, the pulpit was supplied frequently by Prof. Keirstead of Acadia College. On the above date Rev. N. F. Swaffield accepted a call from the church and became its pastor. This was a short and unfruitful pastorate, of eighteen months only. Notwithstanding the fact that the church had adopted a system of liberally contributing toward a pastor's salary, it immediately fell off, and it was extremely difficult to raise \$600 as a salary; consequently the pastor became dissatisfied and the church officers discouraged. When the engagement of Rev. N. F. Swaffield was dissolved in the middle of the year, the church decided, being somewhat in debt, (having for the second time sold their parsonage, and being engaged in the construction of a new one) that they would not, for a time at least, secure a stated pastor, but obtain supplies for Sabbath services from Acadia College. Thus matters continued until December, 1884, when the church, realizing fully the needs of a regular pastor, extended a call to the Rev. J. McLean, which was accepted, and he immediately entered upon his duties. The new and commodious parsonage being completed the new pastor was the first to occupy it. Although he came to the church with impaired health, his zeal and energy, accompanied with his faithful labours, soon presented results, and the church was greatly blessed.

During the autumn of 1885 the village of Hantsport was visited with a scourge, commonly known as the black fish fever, when many of the members of the church and others were called upon to mourn the death of parents, children and friends. Our pastor, physically weak as he was, was constantly at the bedside of the sick and dying, or speaking words of consolation to the afflicted. Nev-

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er will Brother McLean be forgotten by many of
the members of this church and congregation for
his acts of christian kindness during that trying
season. During his labours Rev. Prof. Keirstead
rendered him much assistance, as failing health
prevented him from discharging some of the duties
to which he was called.

The health of Brother McLean continued to
fail so, that in May, 1886, the church granted him
a vacation, hoping that a change of climate might
improve his health and enable him to resume his
labours. After four months' absence in Southern
California he returned, and in September was again
with the church with his health partially restored.
He continued to labour until December when he
was again prostrated; and feeling that he could no
longer perform the work of a pastor tendered his
resignation, which the church declined to accept
but allowed him to continue his pastorate until his
death, which occurred April 2nd, 1887, much la-
mented by the church and community Rev. Dr.
S. T. Rand, who had some years previously sever-
ed his connection with this church and the Baptist
denomination, was restored to its fellowship, and
during the last illness of Brother McLean frequen-
tly occupied the pulpit with acceptance to the peo-
ple.

The church was again without a pastor until
August, 1887, when Rev. D. Simpson came, and
after remaining a short time was engaged as pastor.
He laboured acceptably for one year, during which
time he organized the first Society of Young Peo-
ple's Christian Endeavor, which has since been dis-
solved and a young people's union formed. Al-
though his pastorate was short it was not without
success—15 being added to the church by baptism.

From August to November the meetings of

the church were well sustained without a pastor.

On November 1st, Rev. P. S. McGregor visited the church, and a call being extended was by him accepted, when he at once entered upon his duties, and has continued a faithful pastor until the present time. This has been the longest pastorate excepting one (that of Rev. Wm. Burton) in the history of the church; and it has been characterized by united labour of pastor and people, resulting in prosperity to the church and Glory to God.

During the year 1888 Messrs. Churchills intimated to the church that they wished to assist in making some repairs on the meeting-house. Subsequently, at their own expense and without any assistance from the church, they thoroughly recovered the outside and vestry, and remodelled inside of vestry; and made other repairs to the amount of about \$2000.

In the spring of the following year, the church having secured the consent of the pew-owners, removed the old pews and replaced them with new modern ones; remodelled and refurnished the interior of the building, at a cost of about \$1200. Therefore, the Hantsport Baptist Church now owns and occupies property to which the public are freely invited, and to which all sects are welcome. This property, includes parsonage and church building now in course of erection at Mt. Denson at a cost of from \$1000 to \$1200; in all about \$9,000.

During the sixty-four years of the history of this church, its spiritual life has been characterized by much faithful christian labour; its records show but little strife or discord; and never in its history has there been bickering or division that have tended to create disunion or mar the peace or prosperity of its mission. It has had its bright and its dark seasons; its years of prosperity and years of adver-

without a pastor. Mr. McGregor visited and extended was by entering upon his pastoral pastor until the longest pastorate (Burton) in the town characterized by a people, resulting in glory to God.

Churchills intended to assist in the new house. Subsequently and without any thoroughly re-modelled inside to the amount of

year, the church new-owners, re-furnished the interior with new about \$1200. The church now owns the public are free-welcome. This church building on at a cost of \$10,000.

The history of the church characterized by its records show in its history that have tended to prosperity and its dark years of adver-

sity; but through them all its trust has been in God and in His promise that He never would forsake His people, but give unto them His Kingdom.

During the history of the church it has had 15 pastors—the longest six years; the shortest six months.

Present number of members, 258.

